

# THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE WESTERN TOWN COMPANY.

THE WESTERN TOWN COMPANY was organized and received its first instalment of five dollars per share on the third Monday of October, 1856.

The object of the Company was to explore, select, and improve new locations for towns. The Board of Directors were led to turn their attention to the valley of the Big Sioux, in consequence of a description of the Sioux Falls found in a book entitled the "History of the States and Territories of the Great West." They immediately dispatched Ezra Millard, Esq., as their agent to the Falls, and to such other places as he might deem of value to the Company in that region of country. He procured the site at Nicolet, and took possession of the Falls in the name of the Company.

The season being now far advanced it was thought advisable not to extend their operations any farther in the West during the winter. A contract was made by Mr. Millard with Mr. David M. Mills, by which Mr. Mills was to keep possession of said Falls until the first of May last. During the winter the Company purchased eleven and a half acres of land of P. A. Lorimier, in the city of Dubuque. In the month of March last, Mr. J. T. Jarrett was employed by the Company to go to the Falls and take the place of Mr. Mills, to survey, and plat and otherwise improve the claim at the Falls. There has been put up at the Falls an Engine and Saw Mill, and the same is now in active operation. A small stone dwelling house, a frame store and several frame dwellings, all of which are completed by this time. A large number of claims have been made in the vicinity of the Falls, and a great many men are intending to move into the town and upon their claims in the Spring with their families.

The Company have there some five or six men, and two ox teams who are engaged this Winter in getting out and sawing lumber to be in readiness for the Spring business. There is no place yet known within the territory of Dacotah that has so great natural advantages as Sioux Falls.

We can in no way, probably, give a more satisfactory description of Sioux Falls than by taking the description given by Dr. G. M. Staples, immediately after his return from the Falls, and published in the Daily Times of the 13th of October last. The Dr. says :--

Thirty-five miles above the mouth of the Reek river is the State line, and three miles north and six miles west of the line are the celebrated Falls of the Sioux. The river, by turning and running northward, forms a large bend, four miles deep, and three to three and one-half across the top of the bow. Near the termination of this bend, a short distance above where the river turns to run south again, are the Falls situated. Here the east bank of the stream is west from the Falls. Above the Falls the river is divided and forms an island of fifteen acres in extent, which is covered with a dense growth of timber—a fit place for pic-nics, Fourth of July orations, and political gatherings. So soon as the river unites below the island, the waters begin to tumble over the successive strata of rock as they crop out; for the entire bed and banks of the stream for two thousand feet along the Falls above and below, are nothing but the everlasting rock. Beyond are no rocks—scarcely even a boulder is found. In a distance of two hundred feet below the island there are some twelve or fifteen steps of rock, ranging from one to nine feet each in perpendicular height, and presenting the appearance of an immense stone stairway. Over these the river, spread out two hundred feet in width, tumbles with accelerated velocity. A rapid then succeeds for two hundred feet, when we come to a fall of six feet, and fifty feet below, another fall of eighteen feet. One hundred and seventy-five feet from the last, is the main fall of twenty-one feet in perpendicular height. These two latter, or main falls, are divided into three sluices or races each, which, with one exception, are not over three feet wide, and through which at this season all the water passes. One can walk across these natural dams dry shod, while the waters rush past his feet and plunge into the boil below. The race of each main fall on the eastern bank may be readily turned to use. They run into the bank some forty or fifty feet, at an angle of forty-five degrees, from the main river. The waters here plunge over the fall, and after excavating a place in the stone for a good-sized water-wheel, they find their way back again to the river through a cut in the solid rock twenty to twenty-five high and three feet wide. The observer is inclined to exclaim as did old Thomas Fuller of the strawberry, "doubtless God might make a better water power, but doubtless he never did." The rock presents a fine appearance to the eye. It is of reddish brown; and appears to be granite, with some foreign coloring matter. Though very hard, it is readily broken into the requisite form by the hammer. Large masses lie detached on shore above the regular stratum, and huge blocks eighteen, and twenty feet high and twelve feet square stand in the river with as smooth sides as if dressed with a mason's hammer. Along the east bank of the stream, and one-third of a mile back, are the bluffs. They are scarcely worthy the name, as a carriage can be driven up any part of them. On reaching the top one sees before him the other arm of the bow in the river, and away northward as far as the eye can extend, the belting of fine timber indicates whence the river comes. The distance to the river from the bluffs above indicated, is three or more miles, and so gradual is the descent and level the surface, that the observer half believes it was intended by Nature for a vast bowling alley. Along this bottom is an excellent opportunity to secure claims containing both prairie and timber."

This claim consists of three hundred and sixty-five acres. The Company have a plat of it nearly completed. As soon as that plat is finished lots will be offered for sale at such prices as may be fixed by the Board of Directors. It has been stated by these persons who have floated down the Big Sioux in canoes that the stream is navigable to the Falls for steam boats from three to four months in the year.

A Steamboat went from Sioux City to near the mouth of Rock river last Summer.

It is expected that Sioux County will be organized during the next session of the Legislature, and that Nicolet will be made the county seat.

The Company are now taking steps to have a steamboat run to the Falls in the Spring, during the navigable season. There will be a weekly mail established between the Falls and Sioux City as early as the first of May next.

## STATEMENT

*Showing the Receipts, Expenditures, and Assets of the Company.*

Total Cash Receipts, .....	\$20 477 20
Purchases and expenses, .....	20 001 50
Cash on hand, .....	475 70

## ASSETS OF THE COMPANY.

111½ Acres of Land on Dodge Street, cost \$300.00 per acre, valued at \$500.00 per acre,	\$5 750 00
33 " " at Julien, " 3,044.00 " 200.00 "	6 690 00
296 " " at Nicolet, " 2,451.00 " 50.00 "	11 800 00
505 " " at Sioux Falls (a claim) " 100.00 "	30 500 00
Personal Property, consisting of Teams, Wagons, Supplies, Steam Engine, Cash on hand and due, .....	6 609 00
Total amount of Assets, .....	67 619 00
Debts owed by the Company, .....	4 845 22
Nett Assets of the Company, .....	62 773 78
Which being divided by 251 shares gives the value of each share, .....	250 89

H. S. HETHERINGTON, PRESIDENT.	} Finance Committee.
WM. CHURCHILL, VICE PRESIDENT.	
GEORGE M. STAPLES,	

GEORGE P. WALDRON, SECRETARY.

Dubuque, Iowa, October 1st, 1887.

Groff

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